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Book Review Section.

A LETTER AND TWO BOOK REVIEWS FROM LAST YEAR'S PRESIDENT, HOLLIS DANN, ITHACA, N. Y.

Enclosed is a check for five dollars toward the Journal fund. Here's hoping you will receive contributions sufficient to enable you to print the Journal on better paper. The effect of the cheap paper such as was used for the September edition is most unfavorable. The impression upon educators outside of our organization, and upon people in general, conveyed by the decidedly poor appearance of the Journal is most unfortunate. Cheap stock for a program, a pamphlet, or an advertisement is poor economy, inevitably cheapening the enterprise which it is intended to promote.

Of course I am fully aware that the editor is compelled to use this inferior stock because of financial limitations. The Conference should provide funds sufficient to allow the use of stock that will give a proper tone and dignity to its official organ.

The Editor's suggestion that members send in reviews of books which they have found helpful, is most timely. Were the suggestion generally followed, the greatest source of self-improvement—viz.—the reading of the right sort of books, would receive a decided impetus among the members of the Conference. That a musician should always be studying some book directly related to his profession is a truism which it is hardly necessary to state. A wise selection of books is obviously of the greatest importance. Therefore the exchange of ideas through the Journal concerning the best books for the supervisor of music, should be exceedingly beneficial to all concerned.

During the past few months I have read and re-read with increasing interest "Interpretation in Song" by Harry Plunkett Greene, published by the McMillan Co., New York.

This book was written by one of the most accomplished English singers, and treats the vital subject of interpretation in a direct, practical, and most illuminating way. "Interpretation is the highest branch of the singer's art." "The further the singer advances in his art, the higher the place which study takes in comparison with performance." If we substitute "supervisor" for "singer" in these two sentences, their truth and force will not be impaired.

The supervisor sets the standard of song interpretation in his schools. His interpretations, good, bad, or indifferent, to a large degree create the ideals which prevail among the hundreds or thousands of children under his direction. There is no escaping this responsibility.

Artistic interpretation is just as essential to the chorus as to the individual singer—equally as vital to the orchestra as to the solo violinist. But the interpretative element in the chorus and orchestra is the conductor, not, primarily, the individual singer or player. The supervisor is a conductor of some sort all the time, from the Kindergarten through the high school. That he shall have sane, clear-cut, and correct ideas and ideals of song interpretation is essential to real success. While it is true that musicianship and interpretative power must be acquired through the study and hearing of good music, it is also true that the careful study of good books is a vital and invaluable aid to interpretation.

"Interpretation in Song" treats an illusive and difficult topic in a surprisingly definite and tangible manner. Evidence of this is found in the "main rules", examples of which follow:

The observance of Main Rule I—"Never stop the march of a song" will eliminate one of the most serious and common faults of the young singer and conductor—that of breaking the rhythm for the sake of "expression."

"Sing mentally through the rests"—that is, during the pauses in the vocal part while the accompaniment continues. The author would train the singer to begin "singing" at the first note played in the accompaniment and cease singing

at the last beat of the last note of the final symphony. The value of this vital participation is clearly brought out in the chapter devoted to this rule. "Sing as you speak"—is a treatise on Purity of Diction, Sense of Rhythm, and Identity of Texture in the sound of the spoken and sung word—a most helpful chapter on the use and abuse of vowels and consonants in singing.

Parts of the book are devoted to The Making of Programs, How to Study a Song, How to Breathe, Rubato, The Singing of Recitative, and other important elements of interpretation.

Because of its practical nature and its non-technical treatment of difficult problems, the book is particularly valuable for any serious student of singing.

There came to my desk lately *The Laurel Glee Book*, a volume of songs for male voices edited by M. Teresa Armitage and published by C. C. Birchard & Co., Boston, Mass.

A careful examination proves this to be a book of unusual merit, particularly well adapted for boys' high school glee clubs. While there is an enormous amount of music published for male voices, most of it is beyond the possibilities of young voices. Extreme compass of the first tenor and second bass parts, technical difficulties, and general unsuitableness of text and music are present in most collections of music for male voices.

None of these undesirable elements appear in this collection. Throughout the entire book of sixty-five songs the first tenor part does not extend above the fifth line, excepting in three songs, one of the three touching F sharp once, another having one G on an unaccented part of the measure, and the third, an arrangement of "The Soldiers' Chorus", in which G occurs in the melody several times. The same delightful regard for the immature bass is consistently shown. Only once does the bass part extend below the first line G, touching F sharp in one measure only. Most of the music is very simple; none of it is difficult.

The arrangements are for three and four voices and are uniformly excellent.

Considering the severe limitations of compass and the restrictions resulting from three part writing, the arrangements are surprisingly satisfactory. By alternating the melody between the bass, second tenor, and first tenor, a pleasing and musical solution of many difficulties has been reached; at the same time the several parts have been made more melodious and interesting.

Miss Armitage has shown excellent taste and judgment in the selection of material, combining as it does attractive folk songs, spirituals, old American Songs, sailors' chanteys and college songs, with a fair amount of more serious music. The general character of both words and music will appeal to boys in high school and college. It is light and often humorous without being musically cheap or textually objectionable. Coarse jokes, cheap horseplay, and kindred tendencies, so prevalent in would-be-humorous songs for male voices, find no place in this book.

No one save an accomplished musician, skillful and experienced in writing for male voices could have made these harmonizations. Especial credit is therefore due to N. Clifford Page, Harvey Worthington Loomis, and others, for the remarkably clever arrangements and excellent piano accompaniments.

This book will supply a very urgent need among the large and rapidly increasing number of boys' glee clubs in high school and college, and will be equally useful for community glee clubs.

TWO NEW BOOKS FOR THE MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Reviewed by K. W. GEHRKENS, Oberlin, Ohio.

Everyone has heard about how Glenn Woods persuaded the Board of Education of Oakland, Cal., to spend \$5,000 in one lump for musical instruments several years ago, but perhaps some of you do not know so much about what Mr. Woods has been doing with all these instruments and with the additional